

# San Diego County Fire

## Mission Statement

Coordinate, regionalize, and improve fire protection and emergency response services across San Diego County.

## Department Description

The San Diego County Fire (SDCF), formerly known as the San Diego County Fire Authority, delivers comprehensive fire and emergency medical services across 1.7 million acres of unincorporated San Diego County. SDCF employs a cooperative approach to provide a greater depth of resources by partnering with CAL FIRE to provide services as one department, County Fire. Operating under the philosophy of “One Team, One Mission,” leadership is united under the Fire Chief, who oversees fire service and operations, and the Director, who oversees the administrative support to County Fire. In the last five years, the department has expanded to provide fire response paramedic services to over 90% of the service area and more than doubled in size: increasing the number of first responder personnel, the number of career-staffed fire stations, and the level of services provided to the communities through implementation of a cohesive pre-fire strategy focused on public education, defensible space inspections, structure hardening, fuels management projects and protecting evacuation corridors, in addition to the continued administration of the Volunteer Reserve Firefighter Program. The extensive growth of the organization led to the reorganization of the previous governance structure, County Service Area (CSA) No. 135, and the establishment of a new dependent fire protection district. On July 7, 2020 (1), the Board of Supervisors approved the necessary actions to form the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD). On December 7, 2020, San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) finalized the formation of the SDCFPD.

To ensure these critical services are provided, San Diego County Fire has 27.00 staff years and a budget of \$52.3 million.



## 2020–21 Anticipated Accomplishments



### Building Better Health

- Promote the implementation of a service delivery system that is sensitive to individuals’ needs
  - Promoted events that encourage residents to learn more about improving their health and wellness.
    - ◆ The goal of continued collaboration with the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), to provide blood pressure screenings at 15 locations as part of the County’s “Love Your Heart” campaign was not met due to operational impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
    - ◆ In response to changing community needs, first responder personnel intended to continue collaboration with HHSA to provide training events for the ‘Stop the Bleed’ program, a national awareness campaign to encourage bystanders to become trained, equipped and empowered to help in a bleeding emergency situation before professional help arrives. The goal of 20 training events was not met due to operational impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.



### Living Safely

- Encourage and promote residents to take important and meaningful steps to protect themselves and their families for the first 72 hours during a disaster
  - Leveraged internal and external partnerships to provide resources to engage residential, visitor and business communities in personal disaster readiness.
    - ◆ In collaboration with HHSA, County Library and other public and private partners, completed the installation of residential lock boxes at or near the front door of 150 at-risk individuals to allow first responder access to

## Strategic Initiative Legend

			
BBH	LS	SE/T	OE
	- Audacious Vision		
	- Enterprise Wide Goal		
	- Department Objective		

For more information on alignment to the Strategic Initiatives refer to the Group Description section within the Public Safety Group Summary. Text that is followed by EWG nomenclature indicates coordination with at least one other department.

homes during an emergency, exceeding the goal of 50 due to the implementation of a community-based public outreach approach.

- ◆ Provided Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) training classes for three at-risk communities within the boundaries of the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD), falling short of the goal of seven due to operational impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ◆ Developed a community wildfire preparedness plan for two at-risk communities within SDCFPD boundaries.
- Plan, build and maintain safe communities to improve the quality of life for all residents
  - Identified and mitigated community threats that impact quality of life.
  - ◆ Participated in two Tactical Resource Training (TRT) events with partnering agencies to support the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) program.
  - ◆ Facilitated the installation or upgrade of five emergency generators at fire stations within SDCFPD boundaries.
  - ◆ Performed fire inspections at 70% (389 of 556) of existing businesses within the SDCFPD boundaries, falling short of the goal of 85% due to operational impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - ◆ Completed 100% (35) of annual inspections in every building used as a public or private school (Group E occupancies) for compliance with building standards within the SDCFPD boundaries.
  - ◆ Completed 100% (13) of annual inspections in every building used as a hotel, motel, lodging house, apartment house or residential care facility (certain Group R occupancies) for compliance with building standards within SDCFPD boundaries.
- Continue to coordinate with CAL FIRE to increase recruitment and training opportunities for the Volunteer Reserve Firefighter Program.
- ◆ The goal of expanding the Apprentice Program for Volunteer Firefighters to continue to promote opportunities for future recruitment of high school students was not met due to operational impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ◆ Participated in 2 virtual job fairs to recruit Volunteer Reserve Firefighters, falling short of the goal of 12 public outreach events due to operational impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Operational Excellence

- Promote a culture of ethical leadership and decision making across the enterprise
  - Implemented tools and trainings to improve leadership and project management skills.

- ◆ Developed a formal plan for organizational management inclusive of coaching, job shadowing, and mentoring.
- Align services to available resources to maintain fiscal stability
  - Ensured our influence as a regional leader on issues and decisions that impact the financial well-being of the County.
  - ◆ Implemented Streamline, an inspection tracking system, to support Community Risk Reduction activities related to community fire prevention.
  - ◆ On July 7, 2020 (1), the Board of Supervisors accepted the LAFCO recommendation and approved the necessary actions to form the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD). On December 7, 2020, LAFCO finalized the formation of the SDCFPD.
  - ◆ On December 8, 2020 (1), an action to address the variation in tax revenues resulting from past annexations and jurisdictional changes was approved by the Board of Supervisors through the adoption of a resolution standardizing tax revenue transferred to SDCFPD to 6% for all tax rate areas within the current boundaries of the SDCFPD to be effective in Fiscal Year 2022-23.
- Provide modern infrastructure, innovative technology, and appropriate resources to ensure superior service delivery to our customers
  - Utilized new and existing technology and infrastructure to improve customer service.
  - ◆ Implemented tools to enhance incident management, situational awareness, and fire pre-planning by augmenting the GIS Solutions Software contract with Intterra software, allowing fire agencies to access data in one centralized, visual interface.
  - ◆ Provided exceptional emergency services by responding to 78% (4,695 of 6,041) of emergency calls within the “Total Response Time” standard for the regional category (urban, rural, and outlying) identified in the San Diego County Fire Standards of Cover, exceeding the goal of 70%.

## 2021–23 Objectives



## Building Better Health

- Promote the implementation of a service delivery system that is sensitive to individuals’ needs
  - Promote events that encourage residents to learn more about improving their health and wellness.
  - ◆ Collaborate with the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) under the direction of the COVID-19 Test, Trace, Treat (T3) Strategy to prioritize testing of



populations and communities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, including testing at the border and rural communities.

- ◆ Enhance responsiveness to the changing environment and community needs by providing COVID-19 and flu vaccinations to rural areas of the region through close collaboration with HHSA.
- ◆ In response to the changing community needs, first responder personnel will continue collaboration with HHSA to provide 20 training events for the 'Stop the Bleed' program, a national awareness campaign to encourage bystanders to become trained, equipped and empowered to help in a bleeding emergency situation before professional help arrives.



### Living Safely

- Encourage and promote residents to take important and meaningful steps to protect themselves and their families for the first 72 hours during a disaster
  - Leverage internal and external partnerships to provide resources to engage residential, visitor and business communities in personal disaster readiness.
    - ◆ Continue collaboration with HHSA, County Library, and other public and private partners to complete installation of residential lock boxes at or near the front door of at least 50 at-risk individuals to provide efficient fire protection services by allowing first responder access to homes during an emergency.
    - ◆ Enhance responsiveness to the changing environment and community needs by providing Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) training classes for seven at-risk communities within the service area of the SDCFPD.
    - ◆ Engage with communities on evacuation planning, working together to identify primary, secondary, alternative and emergency options, continuing a multi-year effort to create customized evacuation maps and guides, to further public education in this critical area.
    - ◆ Strengthen wildfire protection in existing and future communities by enhancing a network of fuel breaks around communities to improve defensibility and tactical firefighting options, and reduce fire spread to surrounding wildlands.
- Plan, build and maintain safe communities to improve the quality of life for all residents
  - Identify and mitigate community threats that impact quality of life.
    - ◆ Improve the delivery of pre-hospital medical services by ensuring a fire-rescue helicopter paramedic is available to provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) emergency medical services on air rescues throughout the County.
- ◆ Reduce the potential for loss of existing structures by performing fire inspections at 90% of existing businesses within the service area of the SDCFPD.
- ◆ Maintain program compliance with the State requirements by completing 100% of annual inspections in every building used as a public or private school (Group E occupancies) for compliance with building standards within the service area of the SDCFPD.
- ◆ Maintain program compliance with the State requirements by completing 100% of annual inspections in every building used as a hotel, motel, lodging house, apartment house or residential care facility (certain Group R occupancies) for compliance with building standards within the service area of the SDCFPD.
- ◆ Reduce the potential for fire spread from wildland to structures and vice versa through the continued implementation of an accelerated defensible space inspection cycle for improved properties, benefitting not only the homeowner but the neighbors, responders, and surrounding lands.
- Continue to coordinate with CAL FIRE to increase recruitment and training opportunities for the Volunteer Reserve Firefighter Program.
  - ◆ Expand the Apprentice Program for Volunteer Firefighters to continue to promote opportunities for future recruitment of high school students.
  - ◆ Foster the department's relationship with community groups by participating in 12 public outreach events to recruit Volunteer Reserve Firefighters. The department's goal is to recruit at least 25 Volunteer Reserve Firefighters through these events and other outreach efforts.



### Operational Excellence

- Promote a culture of ethical leadership and decision making across the enterprise
  - Implement tools and trainings to improve leadership and project management skills.
    - ◆ Foster employee health and professional development through the development of formal plans for organizational management inclusive of coaching, job shadowing, and mentoring.
- Align services to available resources to maintain fiscal stability
  - Ensure our influence as a regional leader on issues and decisions that impact the financial well-being of the County.
    - ◆ Provide for the emerging needs and long-term sustainability of capital assets by developing a facilities replacement plan.

- Provide modern infrastructure, innovative technology and appropriate resources to ensure superior service delivery to our customers
- Utilize new and existing technology and infrastructure to improve customer service.
  - ◆ Improve emergency planning and implement tools to enhance incident management, situational awareness, and fire pre-planning, specifically Internet Alerting and continued upgrades to the Regional GIS (Geographic Information System) Public Safety Database.
  - ◆ Provide exceptional emergency services by responding to 90% of emergency calls within the “Total Response Time” standard for the regional category (urban, rural, and outlying) identified in the San Diego County Fire Standards of Cover.
  - ◆ Improve community safety by responding to 90% of emergency incidents with the “Response Force” standard associated with the optimal number of

firefighters required to mitigate the emergency safely and effectively, as described in the San Diego County Fire Standards of Cover.

- ◆ Respond to the growing need for fire protection and emergency medical services in the unincorporated areas of the County by beginning the preconstruction/ design phase of the East Otay Mesa Fire Station through the evaluation of design proposals providing firefighters quarters, training, storage and community education functions.

## Related Links

For additional information about San Diego County Fire, refer to the website at:

- ◆ [www.sdcountyfire.org](http://www.sdcountyfire.org)







Performance Measures	2019–20 Actuals	2020–21 Adopted	2020–21 Estimated Actuals	2021–22 Recommended	2022–23 Recommended
 Number of community CPR classes within SDCFPD boundaries <sup>1, 2</sup>	7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
 Number of “Stop the Bleed” training events within SDCFPD boundaries <sup>1, 3, 4</sup>	N/A	20	-	20	20
 Number of Volunteer Reserve Firefighter (VRFF) Program recruitment public outreach events <sup>4</sup>	6	12	2	12	12
Perform fire inspections at commercial/ business occupancies within SDCFPD boundaries <sup>1, 5</sup>	51%	85%	70% of 556	90%	90%
Perform fire inspections at Group E occupancies within SDCFPD boundaries <sup>1, 3</sup>	N/A	100%	100% of 35	100%	100%
Perform fire inspections at Group R occupancies and associated sub-categories within SDCFPD boundaries <sup>1, 3</sup>	N/A	100%	100% of 13	100%	100%
 Response time in minutes for first unit on scene for EMS calls at 70% of County fire stations <sup>6</sup>	10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maintain a turnout time of less than 2 minutes for emergency response incidents within SDCFPD boundaries <sup>1, 6</sup>	86%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Respond to medical emergencies within SDCFPD boundaries in 10 minutes <sup>1, 3, 7</sup>	N/A	70%	78% of 6,041	N/A	N/A
Respond to emergency calls within the 8:00 minute “Total Response Time” standard for Urban areas <sup>8</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	90%	90%
Respond to emergency calls within the 13:00 minute “Total Response Time” standard for Rural areas <sup>8</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	90%	90%
Respond to emergency calls within the 23:00 minute “Total Response Time” standard for Outlying areas <sup>8</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	90%	90%
Respond to 90% of emergency incidents with the optimal number of firefighters associated with the “Response Force” standard <sup>9</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	90%	90%

Table Notes

<sup>1</sup> In Fiscal Year 2020–21, the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD) was established to replace the previous governance structure of County Service Area (CSA) 135. All references to CSA 135 have been updated to SDCFPD.

<sup>2</sup> This measure was discontinued in Fiscal Year 2020–21 and replaced with a measure that reflects efforts by San Diego County Fire’s Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to support the “Stop the Bleed” campaign.



<sup>3</sup>This was a new measure for Fiscal Year 2020–21.

<sup>4</sup>This goal was not met due to operational impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The recommendations for gatherings and physical distancing requirements in the Public Health Order in effect will determine the department’s ability to participate in future events.

<sup>5</sup>The goal was not met due to operational impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Protocols have been developed to allow staff to perform fire inspections, while maintaining the standards for reducing person-to-person contact defined in the Public Health Order to ensure the goal is met in future years.

<sup>6</sup>This measure was discontinued in Fiscal Year 2020–21 and replaced with a measure that reflects the operational goal of improving response times.

<sup>7</sup>In Fiscal Year 2020–21 a measure capturing the percentage of emergency response drive-times under ten minutes was introduced to reflect the operational goal of providing exceptional emergency services by ensuring the effective deployment of resources. In Fiscal Year 2021–22 this measure will be discontinued and replaced by new measures in order to capture the operational goals for both the “Total Response Time” and “Response Force” standards identified in the San Diego County Fire Standards of Cover.

<sup>8</sup>This is a new measure for Fiscal Year 2021–22 to accurately reflect the operational goal of providing exceptional emergency services. The standards for the regional category (urban, rural, and outlying) identified in the San Diego County Fire Standards of Cover were developed using the Safety Element of the County of San Diego General Plan and best practices identified by the National Fire Protection Association. The *Total Response Time* starts when the 9-1-1 call is received and ends when personnel arrive on scene. Time standards are graduated in relationship to the regional category (urban, rural, and outlying) in which the emergency incident occurs, as identified by land use designation and population density.

<sup>9</sup>This is a new measure for Fiscal Year 2021–22 to accurately reflect the operational goal of improving community safety. The “Response Force” standards identified in the San Diego County Fire Standards of Cover are based on the optimal number of firefighters required to mitigate an emergency safely and effectively. The effective response force standard is categorized into three tiers to reflect variations in hazard type, terrain and population density throughout the region.

## Recommended Budget Changes and Operational Impact: 2020–21 to 2021–22

### Staffing

No change in staffing

### Expenditures

Net decrease of \$1.3 million

- ◆ Salaries & Benefits—increase of \$0.1 million due to negotiated labor agreements and required retirement contributions.
- ◆ Services & Supplies—decrease of \$1.4 million due to Community Risk Reduction one-time grant funded Ember Resistant Vent Program in prior year and the reduction in emergency medical services contracted with HHSA partially offset by additional information technology infrastructure costs.
- ◆ Capital Assets Equipment—decrease of \$1.7 million due to one-time grant funded replacement of fire equipment and apparatus.
- ◆ Expenditure Transfer & Reimbursements—decrease of \$1.6 million associated with centralized General Fund support of one-time fire and emergency medical services. Since these

are transfers of expenditures, it has the effect of \$1.6 million increase in expenditures. The central funding was supported by resources in Countywide Finance Other.

- ◆ Operating Transfer Out—increase of \$0.1 million to fund one-time major maintenance projects.

### Revenues

Net decrease of \$1.3 million

- ◆ Taxes Current Property—increase of \$1.3 million due to recategorization of revenue and anticipated increase in property tax apportionments
- ◆ Intergovernmental Revenues—decrease of \$2.2 million due to one-time grant from CAL FIRE, FEMA Assistance to Firefighters, and Community Development Block Grant.
- ◆ Charges for Current Services—increase of \$0.5 million from the Jamul Indian Village, Fire Protection Districts agreements, and building inspection and plan review services.
- ◆ Miscellaneous Revenues—decrease of \$2.0 million due to one-time Community Risk Reduction program grant revenue and Firestorm 2007 Trust Fund. A total of \$1.4 million in one-time revenue will be rebudgeted to continue the projects and services below:



- ◆ \$1.1 million from Firestorm 2007 Trust Fund for Community Risk Reduction program.
- ◆ \$0.3 million donations from Fire Foundation for information technology projects.
- ◆ Fund Balance Component Decreases—decrease of \$1.0 million due to prior year one-time commitment fund allocation for fire equipment and apparatus purchase. A total of \$0.1 million is budgeted.
- ◆ \$0.1 million to support a portion of departmental costs of the County's existing pension obligation bond (POB) debt. Appropriations in this category are based on the use of restricted General Fund fund balance for POB costs through Fiscal Year 2026–27.
- ◆ Use of Fund Balance—decrease of \$4.9 million. A total of \$2.6 million in unassigned General Fund fund balance is budgeted for one-time expenses.
  - ◆ \$1.1 million for fire apparatus replacement.
  - ◆ \$0.4 million for radio replacements for the Regional Communication System.
  - ◆ \$41,928 to provide fire and emergency medical services.
- ◆ \$1.0 million for renovations, repairs and maintenance of various fire stations.
- ◆ \$49,978 for one-time negotiated salaries and benefits payments.
- ◆ General Purpose Revenue Allocation—increase of \$7.0 million to support ongoing cost related to fire and emergency medical services.

### Recommended Budget Changes and Operational Impact: 2021–22 to 2022–23

Decrease of \$3.2 million due to the completion of one-time costs associated with various Community Risk Reduction Program projects, major maintenance projects, and replacement of fire equipment and apparatus in Fiscal Year 2021–22. For planning purposes, the budget includes a total of \$0.6 million in continued use of unassigned General Fund fund balance to continue efforts as necessary to implement long term efficiency measures. This plan will be reevaluated in future years to ensure long-term sustainability of core San Diego County Fire services.

**Staffing by Program**

	Fiscal Year 2019–20 Adopted Budget	Fiscal Year 2020–21 Adopted Budget	Fiscal Year 2021–22 Recommended Budget	% Change	Fiscal Year 2022–23 Recommended Budget
San Diego County Fire	27.00	27.00	27.00	0.0	27.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>27.00</b>	<b>27.00</b>	<b>27.00</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>27.00</b>

**Budget by Program**

	Fiscal Year 2019–20 Adopted Budget	Fiscal Year 2020–21 Adopted Budget	Fiscal Year 2021–22 Recommended Budget	% Change	Fiscal Year 2022–23 Recommended Budget
San Diego County Fire	\$ 46,676,767	\$ 50,003,438	\$ 49,085,044	(1.8)	\$ 45,877,511
County Service Areas - Fire Protection/EMS	4,228,105	3,547,339	3,201,939	(9.7)	3,201,939
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 50,904,872</b>	<b>\$ 53,550,777</b>	<b>\$ 52,286,983</b>	<b>(2.4)</b>	<b>\$ 49,079,450</b>

**Budget by Categories of Expenditures**

	Fiscal Year 2019–20 Adopted Budget	Fiscal Year 2020–21 Adopted Budget	Fiscal Year 2021–22 Recommended Budget	% Change	Fiscal Year 2022–23 Recommended Budget
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 3,838,487	\$ 4,022,382	\$ 4,140,632	2.9	\$ 4,161,932
Services & Supplies	44,906,447	46,764,036	45,401,910	(2.9)	44,073,077
Other Charges	1,022,245	195,000	195,000	0.0	195,000
Capital Assets Equipment	324,000	3,232,000	1,485,000	(54.1)	385,000
Expenditure Transfer & Reimbursements	(25,000)	(1,625,000)	(20,000)	(98.8)	(20,000)
Operating Transfers Out	838,693	962,359	1,084,441	12.7	284,441
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 50,904,872</b>	<b>\$ 53,550,777</b>	<b>\$ 52,286,983</b>	<b>(2.4)</b>	<b>\$ 49,079,450</b>



## Budget by Categories of Revenues

	Fiscal Year 2019–20 Adopted Budget	Fiscal Year 2020–21 Adopted Budget	Fiscal Year 2021–22 Recommended Budget	% Change	Fiscal Year 2022–23 Recommended Budget
Taxes Current Property	\$ 1,183,009	\$ 1,333,055	\$ 2,599,921	95.0	\$ 2,599,921
Taxes Other Than Current Secured	—	—	16,000	—	16,000
Revenue From Use of Money & Property	—	—	41,000	—	41,000
Intergovernmental Revenues	155,000	2,213,100	—	(100.0)	—
Charges For Current Services	5,295,709	2,640,127	3,132,275	18.6	3,242,361
Miscellaneous Revenues	5,897,229	3,611,261	1,643,923	(54.5)	301,834
Other Financing Sources	262,455	262,455	262,455	0.0	262,455
Fund Balance Component Decreases	1,073,966	1,095,607	97,268	(91.1)	97,268
Use of Fund Balance	6,200,828	7,548,978	2,625,906	(65.2)	600,203
General Purpose Revenue Allocation	30,836,676	34,846,194	41,868,235	20.15	41,918,408
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 50,904,872</b>	<b>\$ 53,550,777</b>	<b>\$ 52,286,983</b>	<b>(2.4)</b>	<b>\$ 49,079,450</b>

